

Good Practice in Social Enterprise

A selection of examples from: Bulgaria, Germany, Greece,
Hungary, Italy, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom



European Union
European Regional Development Fund



The MESSE Project

MESSE (Mechanism for Enhancement of Sustainability and Synergy among Enterprises) is a three year European project funded under the Interreg IVC programme. The project seeks to improve the quality and growth potential of social enterprises in Europe by influencing the effectiveness of regional development policies.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the project seeks to:

- improve the skills and knowledge of policy makers in relation to support structures for social entrepreneurship;
- support social enterprise as a strong, efficient model of social and economic inclusion;
- find out what regulations and measures enhance the social enterprise sector, and which present barriers;
- allow policy makers to understand the relevant legal and public policy framework in each country;
- enable policy makers and local stakeholders to better understand the needs of social enterprises, and identify strategies to best support them;
- increase the range of supportive tools available in each country.

The project lasts from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014, and involves 9 partners:

- Veneto Region (Lead Partner, Italy);
- Region of Attica (Greece);
- Regional Ministry of Equality, Health and Social Policies of Junta de Andalucía (Spain);
- Romanian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly (Romania);
- Pannon Business Network Association (Hungary);
- Sofia Municipality (Bulgaria);
- East Sweden Region (Sweden);
- Adult Education Centre of Hannover (Germany);
- Community Action Hampshire (United Kingdom).

Further information can be found on the project website: www.messe-project.eu

Overview of the Document

As part of the project, all partners identified social enterprises in their local area that meet the criteria to be considered an example of 'good practice'. All good practices chosen met at least one of the following strategic or operational criteria:

Strategic

- measures related to social enterprise that help to strengthen the local economy
- policies that support and promote social enterprise
- support structures and approaches that assist social enterprises
- specific measures that support innovation in social enterprise
- examples of public/private or profit/not-for-profit partnerships enabling social enterprise

Operational

- An effective social enterprise that has been functioning well for several years. It must successfully address at least one of the following objectives:
 - legal/financial exclusion
 - creation or conservation of local employment
 - adaptation to new realities
 - cross sectoral working
 - enablement of social enterprise
 - amenities for local people
 - educational opportunities
 - financial crisis response

Information about the good practices was then collected and an extract is provided within this document. If you wish to view more complete details of each good practice, documents are available on the MESSE project website: www.messe-project.eu

We hope you enjoy reading about the social enterprises, and they provide you with some ideas and inspiration to support you in your own work.

Index

Strategic: Policies that support and promote social enterprise	1
III Pacto Andaluz por la Economía Social (Spain)	2
Third Agreement for the Social Economy in Andalusia	
Strategic: Specific measures that support innovation in social enterprise	4
Integración social y crowdfunding (Spain)	5
Crowdfunding and Social Integration	
Strategic: Support structures and approaches that assist social enterprises	7
Escuela de Economía Social (Spain)	8
School of Social Economy	
ίκτυο Κοινωνικών Επιχειρησεων (Greece)	10
Social Enterprise Network	
Kooptjänst (Sweden)	11
Co-op Service	
Agenzia per la sostenibilità dell'impresa sociale (Italy)	13
Agency for the Sustainability of Social Enterprises	
Hampshire School for Social Entrepreneurs (UK)	15
Strategic: Measures related to social enterprise that help to strengthen the local economy	16
SCA Sierra de las Nieves - Grupo Aloreña (Spain)	17
Co-operative Sierra de las Nieves	
Strategic: Examples of public/private or profit/not-for-profit partnerships enabling social enterprise	19
Convenio de colaboración para ampliación de mercados (Spain)	20
Co-operation Agreement to Expand Markets	

Operational: Creation or conservation of employment	22
Hospital de referencia La Equina SLL (Spain) Reference Hospital “La Equina”	23
Φροντίδα αδέσποτων ζώων και λειτουργία Ιατρείου μικρών ζώων στο καταφύγιο του Δήμου ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ (Greece) Operation of Stray Animal Care Clinic	24
Azalea (Italy)	25
Consorzio in Concerto (Italy) In Concert Consortium	27
Gruppo Polis (Italy) Polis Group	29
Rio Tera Dei Pensieri (Italy)	31
Seen2Help (UK)	33
Trojan Mailing Ltd (UK)	34
Women’s Wisdom (UK)	35
Operational: Rehabilitation and/or Labour Market Integration	36
От кооперация в корпорация - "Райна Княгиня - П" ООД. Осигуряване работни места за хора с увреждания (Bulgaria) From Co-operation to Corporation	37
Работилница за сапуни (Bulgaria) Hope Soap	39
Asociatia Touched Collection (Romania) Touched Collection	41
Ateliere Fara Frontiere (Romania) Workshops without Frontiers	43
Kríziskamra - gyógynövénytermesztés és értékesítés (Hungary) Crisis Pantry	45
FairKauf e.G. (Germany) FairKauf Department Store	47
Zala Megyei Szocioterápiás Intézmény - Kerámia műhely működtetése, a termékek értékesítése (Hungary) Step into the market through ceramics production	50

Operational: Enablement of social enterprise	52
Πράσινη Γέφυρα-Τοπικό Δίκτυο για την Παραγωγή, Μεταποίηση και Προώθηση Οπωροκηπευτικών-Βιολογικών Γεωργικών Προϊόντων και Ειδών Ανθοκομίας (Greece) Green Bridge	53
Operational: Amenities for Local People	55
Creación de cooperativa para la gestión de instalaciones deportivas de titularidad pública (Spain) Creation of a Co-operative for the Management of Public Sport Facilities	56
SoCo Music Project (UK)	58
Parklife (UK)	59
Operational: Social/financial/legal exclusion	60
Arbeitsgemeinschaft (AG) Resohelp des Diakonischen Werks, Stadtverband Hannover e.V. (Germany) Resohelp	61
Hannoversche Werkstätten gem. GmbH (Germany) Hannover Workshops	62
Il Grillo (Italy) The Cricket	64
Primavera '85 (Italy) Springtime '85	66



STRATEGIC: Policies that support and promote social enterprise

III Pacto Andaluz por la Economía Social (Spain)

Third Agreement for the Social Economy in Andalusia

Overview

The Third Agreement on Social Economy in Andalusia is a strategic agreement aiming to promote economic, social and labour development. The main objectives of the agreement are to: develop programmes promoting entrepreneurial activity; develop an innovation strategy; develop a training programme; investment incentives linked to the modernisation and creation of social economy projects; programme for the incorporation of new partners in co-operatives and labour societies; programme to support the innovation and competitiveness of the social economy enterprises.

Location

Throughout Andalusia, Spain

Objectives

1. to promote the principles, values and practices of social economy, throughout Andalusian society and in the productive system.
2. to create and consolidate more and better sustainable enterprises within the Andalusian social economy.
3. to foster high quality employment, improvement of labour conditions, and the professionalism, productivity, and management capacity of partners and workers in the social economy.
4. to improve quality of life and social and economic cohesion in the local and rural context.
5. to strengthen and position the social economy as a visible actor in civil society, promoting and consolidating entrepreneurial associations and their organisational structures.
6. to build and start up the General Commission on Development, Monitoring and Review of the Agreement, to achieve the best possible level of efficiency and effectiveness in the objectives and actions.

Activities

1. development of programmes promoting entrepreneurial activity
2. development of an innovation strategy
3. development of training programmes
4. investment incentives linked to the modernisation and creation of projects in the social economy
5. programme for the incorporation of new partners in co-operatives and labour societies, with a view to creating 280 jobs
6. programme to support the innovation and competitiveness of social economy enterprises.

Achievements

The Third Agreement for the Social Economy in Andalusia is an achievement in itself, bearing in mind that it is the continuation of the previous two Agreements for the Social Economy in Andalusia. The first and second Agreements signed in the years 2002 and 2006 have established a solid basis, reinforcing the effectiveness of promotional policies and the development of the Andalusian social economy. The first Agreement created a framework to raise the visibility of the Andalusian social economy. The Second Agreement opened the framework for dialogue and recognised the variety of activities carried out by social economy enterprises.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

The Third Agreement for the Social Economy promotes a unity of intention for all social economy stakeholders to achieve common goals. This aspect makes the Agreement transferable to other settings, with a political framework in order to pursue political ends.

Total income 2011/12

20,000,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

It would be very difficult for this GP to exist without public funding, because the Third Agreement for the Social Economy itself does not generate income.



STRATEGIC: Specific Measures That Support Innovation in Social Enterprises

Integración social y crowdfunding (Spain)

Crowdfunding and Social Integration

Overview

Arte de Mis Manos is a social enterprise offering support and a home to people with learning disabilities. The enterprise offers a wide variety of workshops based on craftsmanship and ecology where the workers learn a range of skills while making products that are sold locally. The company has recently started an interesting expansion of its possibilities thanks to *crowdfunding*. The crowdfunding has enabled them to make a dehydrator for vegetables and fruits from the locality, and open a restaurant.

Location

Alozaina, Andalusia, Spain

Start date

October 2012

Objectives

Co-operation between private and business sectors in order to achieve broader integration of groups at risk of exclusion.

Activities

A crowdfunding campaign to revitalise a specific handicraft trade in an insertion enterprise and thereby create synergies for an online strategy.

Achievements

New business line in handicraft trade; a private co-operation network; and an online strategy for social innovation.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

It is very transferable to any context, even those in crisis. It is self-sustaining because the money obtained from the sale of the products is reinvested into support for workers living in the community, and expansion into new fields. All four aspects involved in this good practice may be transferred: (1) the model of an insertion company as a way to respond to a crisis; (2) social innovation based on handicrafts in a rural area; (3) the use of a crowdfunding platform; (4) the collaborative nature of the dissemination network.

Total income 2011/12

8,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

There was no public funding.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Crowdfunding enables a quick connection with the community, which gets involved in the project from the very beginning. It helps to promote the initiative and increases independence from public funding in a weak economic environment.

Weaknesses: The enterprise is staffed by volunteers which means that any attempt towards a new field constitutes a big risk.

Difficulties: Scarce public support, impossibility of extending to a stable core group of professionals working with beneficiaries.

Lessons learned: It is necessary to be open to new possibilities and adapt the enterprise according to the real needs of the locality. A policy of openness encourages the flow of contributors which strengthens the project.



STRATEGIC: Support Structures and Approaches That Assist Social Enterprises

Escuela de Economía Social (Spain) **School of Social Economy**

Overview

Created jointly by the *Confederation of Entities for the Social Economy in Andalusia* and the *Andalusian Confederation of Work Co-operatives*, the School of Social Economy is in charge of training, research and development of the local social economy. The II Pact for the Social Economy meant that the School was consolidated as a permanent training centre. The School promotes exchange and co-operation among social entities and enterprises and it has become a natural link to foreign social companies. Its activities comprise:

1. social economy projects and consultancy;
2. international co-operation to promote social economy in other territories such as Latin America;
3. transfer of experiences to other Spanish regions such as Cantabria;
4. research and innovation (coaching and teaching resources).

The School for Social Economy is a reference point for the promotion and dissemination of the values implied in the social economy and it publishes a periodical sustainability report. It runs a training programme focussed on competences related to the social economy.

The School is set up in a heritage building that was restored by the trainees from some schools. This provided training and experience for the trainees, and had a positive impact on local development in Osuna, the municipality where this good practice is located.

In addition to the provision of training and learning, the School has an innovative programme:

- it supports co-operation among social economy companies;
- it provides innovative learning resources in new fields (i.e. culture and creation-based industries in Andalusia);
- it has been a consortium member for the development of the project "Emprende + Innova".

Location

Osuna, Andalusia, Spain

Start date

October 2002

Objectives

The School aims to evaluate the social economy in the region, determining its needs and intervening in concrete areas through projects, promotion and training. It serves as a "gatherer" of different actors, boosting inter-sectorial work.

Activities

Training, co-operation to development, dissemination activities (including Corporate Social Responsibility)

Achievements

Direct impact on 6,864 persons (2010-2011) with a great multiplying effect.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

It would work in any context, provided the organisations involved have the necessary resources to set it up. The School can promote the social economy, create awareness of its particular positive social impact and support new social entrepreneurs. Anything could be transferred and adapted to different realities by just reshaping to fit the context, especially the different training programmes.

Total income 2011/12

1,826,598 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

The School does not receive a global income directly from the public budget, but has been successful in attracting public funding of various sorts. If these contributions were to cease, the School could scale back its ambitions and reduce its co-operation activities, while retaining its main training activity.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Its presence in the whole territory and its expansion to other locations (i.e. Costa Rica) enriching its work with a return from the experience overseas.

Weaknesses: Scarce access to private funding or income generation guaranteeing more autonomy or independence.

Difficulties: The premises are not adapted to people with disabilities. Any potential improvements are limited due to the building's heritage status.

Lessons learned: (1) working in a non-profit organisation requires an extra commitment from workers; (2) the more we focus on co-operation, the stronger the social economy is; (3) without the previous common programme and alliance among the Andalusian organisations of social economy, the School would have been much more limited.

ίκτυο Κοινωνικών Επιχειρήσεων (Greece) **Social Enterprise Network**

Overview

A national network of Social Co-operative Enterprises to promote the interests of Social Economy and Entrepreneurship. The network provides dissemination of information between its members and support services in the fields of legal, financial, and administration. The principal service provided by the Social Enterprise Network is the establishment, development and facilitation of a network of Social Enterprises and emerging Social Enterprises. In particular; the network provides the following services:

- networking meetings
- dissemination of information
- incubation services
- signposting and advice
- training and development
- consortium development
- research and evaluation
- representation of the membership
- securing new funding streams

Location of GP

Athens, Attica, Greece

Start date

December 2011

Objectives of the GP

- to support Social Co-operative Enterprises
- to provide incubation services
- to provide lobbying services

Activities that have taken place

Development and operation of a Networking Portal with more than 80 Social Co-operative Enterprises as members. The Network has already provided start-up and operational services to most of the members.

Achievements of the GP

All objectives of the GP have been achieved and continue to enhance the social economy.

Are there any elements of this project that you think would transfer particularly well to other contexts?

Most of the elements of this GP can be reused in order to develop smaller local networks.

Total annual income of GP 2011/12

The network is based on a voluntary financial contribution of 5,000 €. No other income is made.

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes.

Kooptjänst (Sweden)

Co-op Service

Overview

As of May 2013, Kooptjänst is an umbrella organisation (co-operative) for 8 municipalities and 40 small scale businesses (units). The units sell goods and services in a variety of areas such as landscaping and gardening, cleaning, catering, accounting, cafés, vintage stores and crafts. Each unit has their own business ideas and are constantly developing trade based on local market demand and their own skills and creativity. Kooptjänst is developing a support tool to facilitate the transition from project to real business. With their method, the projects can start functioning as a company with sales and construction of equity; in order to build up the company and begin to employ project participants. Kooptjänst assists in the launch of new social workers' co-operatives and allows them to operate as part of Kooptjänst. Kooptjänst solves the common issues of administration, finance, human resources, education and professional development of the different co-operatives. Support is also given in real estate and property management, procurement, purchasing and marketing. In this way Kooptjänst endeavours to further the economic interests of their co-operatives and create good conditions for sustainable businesses that can grow and develop. The watchwords are - start up, drive safe, accelerate and develop!

Location

Norrköping, East Sweden, Sweden

Start date

Started as an idea in 2006, then in 2009 they started the project, Orangeriet. The concept of Kooptjänst evolved from there and was set up in May 2013.

Objectives

Promote the economic interests of all their co-operatives and create good conditions for sustainable businesses that can grow and develop.

Activities

The watchwords are - start up, drive safe, accelerate and develop!

Achievements

Co-operatives have evolved with approximately 50 employees as of December 2013.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

The core of the following elements could be adjusted to different countries and their rules and regulations:

- the concept of how to transform projects originally funded by the EU into a business;
- the elements in the support structure;
- the business model;
- the innovative process and methods of how to accumulate resources and business ideas.

Total income 2011/12

2,318,694 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Kooptjänst as a business organisation does not receive public funding.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: a showcase of how methods for human growth, based on empowerment and democracy, also lead to economic growth.

Weakness: participants/people in the rehabilitation phase make decisions on when and how to enrol that are unpredictable.

Difficulties: many authorities are involved - roles and regulations differ between them.

Lessons learned: despite all the challenges, this works. People get employed!

Agenzia per la sostenibilità dell'impresa sociale (Italy) **Agency for the Sustainability of Social Enterprises**

Overview

The Agency's purpose is to facilitate and strengthen the synergies between for-profit enterprises, social enterprises and public entities by promoting new forms of collaboration between them, and providing consultancy and support to new collaborations. The Agency provides services in the following areas:

- social research and projects
- law and legislation
- marketing and promotion
- support for social and work integration

The Agency for the Sustainability of Social Enterprises was launched by a partnership established and consolidated under Phase II of the Equal Project "Osmosis – New Opportunities for Social Enterprises". The EU project, which gave birth to the Agency, aimed to develop a new social enterprise culture that would create genuine employment opportunities for disadvantaged people by strengthening social enterprises and building local social and economic development networks of public entities and businesses (for-profit and not-for-profit). The project was promoted by Irecoop Veneto in partnership with local health authorities and a range of other stakeholders. The Agency for the Sustainability of Social Enterprises is considered a spin-off of the Osmosis Project with real added value, given the rarity of EU projects ending with such important and concrete results.

Location

Padua, Veneto, Italy

Objectives

1. promote new opportunities for disadvantaged people by strengthening synergies between social enterprises, for-profit enterprises and public administrations.
2. develop the innovation and competitiveness of social enterprises with consultancy, information and support.
3. guide and support the emergence of a new culture within social enterprises that will combine social aims with economic efficiency and effectiveness, which includes providing real services to business.

Activities

1. an information helpdesk open every day, for social enterprises, public administrations and for-profit enterprises that are interested in finding out what a social enterprise is all about, e.g. Corporate Social Responsibility, legal and regulatory frameworks, social planning in Europe and Italy, and human resources.
2. information and follow-up seminars geared towards local social enterprises and public entities.
3. information and promotion with a newsletter announcing tenders and covering issues of interest to social enterprises.
4. marketing and awareness-raising through meetings with public administrations, social enterprises and for-profit enterprises to promote synergies between stakeholders and to discover new jobs/services appropriate for social enterprises.
5. consultancy for social enterprises to promote development and organisational innovation.

Achievements

During Equal's Osmosis Project, the Agency achieved the following results towards social enterprise sustainability:

- it opened a helpdesk for 400 hours;
- created a team of 35 expert consultants;
- organised 33 refresher and follow-up seminars;
- provided social enterprises region-wide with almost 500 hours of specialist consultancy;
- signed 5 concession agreements between social enterprises and public administrations (concessions included social clauses and required synergies between social enterprises and for-profit enterprises so that the social enterprises could take part);
- signed 2 agreements between for-profit and social enterprises to provide work integration for disadvantaged people (see Article 14 of Italian Legislative Decree DL 276/2003);
- published 10 articles in sector magazines and a monthly newsletter; and promoted an IT consortium comprising Type B social co-operatives and for-profit enterprises.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

The Agency for the Sustainability of Social Enterprises has a high level of transferability. Its formula has a great potential to increase collaboration between public authorities, social enterprises and for-profit enterprises. This co-operation provides social enterprises with advice about public procurement rules and other priorities, giving them the opportunity to boost their entrepreneurial vocation. The Agency has proved to be very useful for the networks, as well as the knowledge and competences it has developed over the years.

Elements that would transfer particularly well are:

1. the legislation promoted by the Agency to foster the development of social enterprises and the work integration of disadvantaged people.
2. the networks, as they encourage stakeholders from different sectors to work together.

Total income 2011/12

Not quantifiable

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

The GP is no longer financed by EU projects but it is still running, albeit structured in a different way. Today, some of the Agency's activities are financed by the organisation which is actually running it and by contributions from the social enterprises that benefit from the service.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

The Agency has created new opportunities to co-operate, to communicate and consequently to work, by focusing on social enterprises' development and Corporate Social Responsibility. The variety of the Agency's actors also helped to create networks and to share experiences, competences and resources; it also launched a multi-stakeholder team that successfully promoted information, raised awareness and provided advice for social enterprises, for-profit businesses and public administrations. The main weak point has been the difficulty of involving for-profit businesses in the Agency's activities, owing to their different culture and vision about social responsibility and job integration of disadvantaged people.

Hampshire School for Social Entrepreneurs (UK)

Overview

The Hampshire School for Social Entrepreneurs (HSSE) trains entrepreneurs who want to meet a social need in society by supporting them in setting up and developing a business. Each programme lasts for one year, and budding social entrepreneurs attend for approximately one day per month. The programme provides bespoke training, mentoring and support to assist budding social entrepreneurs to set up their businesses successfully. Students do not require any academic qualifications to attend the course, just a great idea for a sustainable social enterprise, and the passion and determination to make it happen.

Location

Winchester, Hampshire, UK

Start date

September 2009

Objectives

- to create and develop social entrepreneurs
- to create sustainable jobs
- to enable people to find creative sustainable solutions to intractable social problems

Activities

Provision of training through action learning sets, 'learning by doing', mentoring, and increasing business skills. Trained 52 social entrepreneurs who have created 40 successful businesses.

Achievements

Creation of 40 new social enterprises. Brought in over £450,000 of external investment.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Anywhere and everywhere - the model is international. In particular, the bespoke training model could be transferred. The programme is based upon the needs of individual students, rather than being set out in a pre-formed curriculum. Students learn through experience from existing social entrepreneurs and subject specialists, and attend action learning sets where their peer group assist them in solving difficult challenges. Finally, the mentoring programme is highly transferable.

Total income 2011/12

86,350 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes - it has now been withdrawn.



STRATEGIC:
Measures related to
social enterprise that
help to strengthen the
local economy

SCA Sierra de las Nieves - Grupo Aloreña **(Spain)**

Co-operative Sierra de las Nieves

Overview

The group is a conglomerate of a number of co-operatives aiming to achieve the best exclusive products. Olive co-operatives from the same county gather together in order to strengthen their market position. Each of them specialise in a particular aspect of the industry (canning, conservation, olive oil etc) and they form a common management body in charge of market strategies and expansion.

Location

Sierra de las Nieves, Andalusia, Spain

Start date

November 2012

Objectives

Improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the inland municipalities in the province of Malaga through a conglomerate of olive co-operatives under a guarantee of origin and quality.

Activities

Concentration of offer, new trade channels, analysis of former and current international markets for the product's internationalisation. Application to obtain the guarantee of origin and quality.

Achievements

- socially speaking, the project involved a transition from a situation of rivalry among local enterprises to co-operation;
- gathering all former investments has enabled the optimisation of facilities and procedures;
- the diversification of the industrial activity has been submitted to study.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

It can be replicated in any context where a genuine product exists. Capital is not a priority. It may not relate to olives, but bringing together experiences from the same field, carried out by social economy enterprises that are eager to co-ordinate for the sake of profit maximisation, seems quite feasible. The common umbrella can help them to maximise their results and set up new market strategies.

Total income 2011/12

None specified.

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Good results from the beginning; community support; professionalisation of management.

Weaknesses: shortage of resources.

Difficulties: Trust-building process among companies working in the same field; olive exploitation in a mountainous area.

Lessons learned: New possibilities can be opened up when working together.



STRATEGIC: Examples of partnerships enabling social enterprises

Convenio de colaboración para ampliación de mercados (Spain)

Co-operation Agreement to Expand Markets

Overview

SUPLA is an insertion company offering cleaning and support services for dependent people. Its workers are people at risk of exclusion. As with any other similar company, most shares belong to one association committed to its target group (in this case "Asociación Encuentro en la Calle", targeting people in extreme poverty). Workers are not only employed in the company, but also receive social support from it. 80% of profits are reinvested in the company to improve the services. In times of economic stagnation, being awarded public bids is very important, but the size and nature of the company are an obstacle to gaining contracts. SUPLA therefore signed an agreement with another company (SUARA) in order to take part in public bids.

Location

Cordoba, Andalusia, Spain

Start date

September 2012

Objectives

To increase the market from a social perspective, prioritising people over economic gain.

Activities

Previous and ongoing market research. A memorandum of understanding between the two entities has been signed and a good number of institutional contacts made aware of the initiative.

Achievements

Memorandum of understanding and possibilities to access new markets.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

By adopting the legal form of an insertion company the company is a good practice in itself. An insertion company guarantees an important social return whilst being successful. It could be a transferable model either as an example of how to apply this legal form, or as a pattern on how to establish collaborations with other operators, leading to a better market position.

Total income 2011/12

SUPLA – 1,030,104 €

SUARA - 51,272,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Absolutely.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: The possibility of taking part in any public tender within its social goals, despite its relatively small size; stability because the agreement is permanent and establishes commitment between partners and permanent collaboration.

Weaknesses: None identified so far.

Difficulties: The initial trust-building process.

Lessons learned: Importance of alliances even with companies that may be considered as competition.



OPERATIONAL: Creation or Conservation of Employment

Hospital de referencia La Equina SLL (Spain) **Reference Hospital “La Equina”**

Overview

An equine hospital with a wide range of specialists, trainers and researchers. It has become the best of its kind in Spain and a reference point for the whole continent. It is a good example of a social company (in this case workers own the company) targeting an ambitious business line and an international market. The team is made up of specialists in the fields of orthopaedics, chirurgy, anaesthetics and internal medicine who provide services such as gammagraphies, assisted reproductive programmes, research on disease response, and research and cooperation with national and international excellence groups.

Location

Manilva, Andalusia, Spain

Start date

July 2002

Activities

Research and development in mother cells and design of a fidelisation system. It has been a very positive experience. After analysing a fall in demand in 2006, two activities were undertaken: (1) the set-up of a research and development department through the project ESTEM based on research with mother cells; (2) The establishment of an agreed yearly fee through which the client has access to specified hospital services.

Achievements

Stability in the company.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

Due to the high degree of specialisation and investment, this good practice would have to be transferred over a relatively long time-scale. However, the model proves that the social economy does not have to restrict itself to small scale, low investment projects. The project could be replicated following the same scheme: a social enterprise that diversifies its activities through research and development in veterinary science, research that may be extrapolated to human medicine.

Total income 2011/12

350,000 €

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Specialisation; workers' motivation (workers are owners).

Weaknesses: possible fluctuation of interest in horses due to the financial crisis and perception of the service as a luxury.

Difficulties: Large investment needed.

Lessons learned: Importance of reinvestments dedicated to research.

**Φροντίδα αδέσποτων ζώων και λειτουργία Ιατρείου
μικρών ζώων στο καταφύγιο του Δήμου
ΑΘΗΝΑΪΩΝ (Greece)**
Operation of Stray Animal Care Clinic

Overview

According to European legislation, by 2014 municipalities are obliged to take measures to care for stray animals in their area. Because of the current situation arising from the legislation and the poor operational resources of the municipalities, EKATI submitted a proposal to the Municipality of Athens. This proposed:

(A) provision of innovative services which were non-existent in the market; (B) provision of a sustainable business plan for the care of stray animals instead of the previously spontaneous and fragmented provision of such services by volunteering groups; (C) provision of workplaces (employability); (D) implementation of the Frame Law 4019/2011 for the social economy resulting in social cohesion conditions.

Location

Megara, Attica, Greece

Start date

August 2012

Objectives

- using the legislation so that current entrepreneurship better addresses aspects of the social economy.
- solution to the problem of caring for stray animals in municipal regions.
- meeting the requirements of the legislation for the care of stray animals.
- increased employability leading to a rise in social cohesion.

Achievements

Solution of the stray animal care problems in municipal regions; assimilation of the legislation for the care of stray animals; increased social cohesion by raising the employability of people from socially excluded groups.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

EKATI's GP was innovative in the social enterprise sector. During the implementation procedure it created a General Framework Agreement based on the relevant legislation, which can in future be used as a template by all interested parties: third sector entrepreneurs, municipalities and regions, the private sector and citizens. Moreover it can be used as a GP wherever there is a need for unemployment relief actions together with environmental and healthcare actions.

Total income 2011/12

200,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes, but for less than one third of the project.

Azalea (Italy)

Overview

The co-operative offers many different types of services. They can be grouped into six areas:

- multiculturalism
- learning disabilities
- physical disabilities
- mental health
- health and elderly people
- hospitality

Each area creates its own care products. The most important, significant and innovative projects carried out are:

- Autism: working groups between co-operatives and private social organisations that deal with autism to talk, discuss and solve common problems related to this issue. The school environment is really important and therefore the staff work with the classmates of the autistic child.
- SAD: home care services. The co-operative staff are collaborating to try to reorganise the local system of primary health care. To this end, they are also forming a consortium with the recently founded Veneto In Salute Consortium. The reorganisation aims to both streamline public services, and to propose an offer for private but accessible social and health services.
- Klinikos Project offers services in dentistry, specialised psychology, neuropsychiatry, speech therapy etc. These are 'paid for' services, but of good quality and low cost.
- Nel cuore dell'ospitalità Project (Creating Hospitality): this is a hotel reception and food service project directed to various kinds of customers (tourists, citizens, traders, professionals, etc) in which 38 beds are for psychiatric patients, thus classifying the hotel as a rehabilitation facility. Patients are integrated through work and once the integration process has ended, they are placed in the rehabilitation facility. Patients live in the hotel with other guests and the stay is charged to the local Health Authority which pays the co-operative a daily rate. They are followed by specialists (health care workers, nurses, educators, psychologists, etc) of the co-operative who have also learned to be hoteliers and restaurateurs, while the reception and restaurant workers have also learned to do rehabilitation tasks.
- Azalea Home Project: a laboratory has been created with the aim of producing household items (pillows with fine wools, or lamps covered with buttons) under the supervision of a designer. Each item produced is unique. These products are sold in prestigious shops in Verona's old town centre. In this way they can gain visibility in places where social co-operation is not present. The sale is promoted through social networks and carried out at the Grancan Hotel, as well as at various events.

Location

Pescantina, Veneto, Italy

Objectives

Azalea co-operative is dedicated to supporting the welfare system of the local area, providing services to families in the Verona area (one of the main cities in Veneto) in order to strengthen local social inclusion.

Activities

The co-operative provides 82 different types of services.

Achievements

Azalea has a unique approach to welfare services and this allows the co-operative to work primarily with the local health and social-care unit for most services. This unit has recently received an award from the Ministry of Social Policies due to the way in which the Azalea co-operative has managed the mediation services in the unit.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

The GP offers a great example of an innovative rehabilitation and education project and its involvement with the structures of public health is certainly transferrable. Some specific projects are also important resources, for example the Klinikos Project, "territorial service of prevention and care", Azalea Home Project or Nel cuore dell'ospitalità Project (Creating Hospitality) described above.

Total income 2011/12

13,000,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Liquidity for the co-operative has never been a problem; however, in 2012 a part of the allowance has been used to cover some losses and it is expected that in 2013, if the public authority does not pay regularly, the co-operative may have difficulties in liquidity. In effect the important relationship with the public sector could be a problem if public funding were withdrawn.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

A strong point which has stimulated the development of the co-operative has been the range of advanced relational skills and the professional competence of its members.

Another strength of the co-operative is the commitment of the associated operators, even at a lower level, through periodic meetings and working groups. The co-operative made some mistakes on some business ventures, focusing on the product designing phase rather than on the communication/selling one (this concerns mainly the reception products). Moreover, since it used to work mainly with the public sector, within the co-operative there is a kind of "resistance" ideology to charge for services. The Board of Directors is working with the internal operators to overcome this cultural barrier.

Consorzio in Concerto (Italy) **In Concert Consortium**

Overview

The Consortium was founded in 2002 by the social co-operative named "L'Incontro" which stressed that the essential need for people with disabilities is to have access to the labour market and not to remain stuck in occupational day care centres. This is why the co-operative choose to group together other social co-operatives to create a larger organisation, which would assist disadvantaged people who want to enter the open labour market.

The Consortium constantly evolves by creating co-operative spin-offs to provide employment for its members, according to four core principles:

- encourage the creation of specialised co-operatives in production and services;
- lead the specialisation process of some of the co-operatives into the industrial sector;
- focus on a restricted client group where it is easier to identify the needs of the community and to initiate processes of shared solidarity;
- prioritise work in the private market, rather than through public sector agreements.

Location

Vedelago, Veneto, Italy

Start date

The first co-operative was established in 1991, the Consortium in 2002.

Objectives

The initial concept from which the Co-operative was born 20 years ago was the need for all people to live with dignity and independence. To make this possible, the people supported by the Consortium must be able to get a job and a salary. Previously, the co-operative worked in collaboration with the Public Administration, through an agreement stating that rehabilitation was the responsibility of the State. The Consortium's methodology is to rehabilitate disadvantaged people by removing them from the traditional day care centres and allowing them to enter or re-enter the employment market. Workers are not expected to carry out all tasks immediately, but are required to respect rules and colleagues. Once some basic experience has been gained, the rehabilitation process begins.

Activities

The 16 co-operatives are divided into 4 macro areas, which function in an entrepreneurial manner:

- social welfare - such as disability services and care for the elderly
- agricultural – such as organic production and rearing of animals
- industrial – such as assembly and pre-assembly of small equipment and wiring
- service area – such as maintenance of green areas, installing solar panels, laundry and linen hire, cleaning services etc.

Achievements

The Consortium is becoming increasingly prominent in Veneto, and is the primary organisation related to job placement of disadvantaged people. The In Concert Consortium is a happy island: 200 people certified as disadvantaged by the Consortium have been lifted from public health care and entered the labour market.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Since 2006, the In Concert Consortium has adopted a "Solidarity Fund Consortium", providing internal financial aid to co-operatives. The aim is to finance projects that will safeguard the work (during times of corporate crisis) and promote new employment opportunities. Each worker pays ten cents per hour into the fund. A Committee of Presidents of the member co-operatives has been created to manage the fund, which also includes two towns and a Bank. The money collected is given to the co-operatives, as needed, in the form of a loan or equity capital. In recent years, almost 700,000 € has been collected and invested. Workers are self-taxing, providing support to each other in times of need.

Total income 2011/12

50,000,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

If public funding were withdrawn the GP could continue to exist, perhaps with some initial liquidity difficulties. The "Solidarity Fund Consortium" tries to cover some financial needs to safeguard employment in moments of crisis.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: economies of scale, multiple opportunities for placement of disadvantaged people, provision of training specific to different client groups.

Weaknesses: ensuring autonomy of individual co-ops.

Gruppo Polis (Italy) **Polis Group**

Overview

Polis Group (Gruppo Polis) is a joint co-operative group which brings together five co-operatives from Padua which carry out educational, rehabilitative, residential and occupational services, and promote the job placement of disadvantaged people, and a culture of openness, inclusion and solidarity.

The Group provides services in key areas of intervention, namely mental health, disability, social exclusion and job placement. Synergy between the co-operatives permits the creation of a real rehabilitation chain.

Location

Padua, Veneto, Italy

Start date

The most longstanding co-operative of the Group has been in existence since 1985.

Objectives

Polis Group is a joint co-operative group which works for disadvantaged people by carrying out educational, rehabilitative, residential and occupational services. It works to promote the job placement of disadvantaged people and a culture of openness, inclusion and solidarity. Polis Group, together with the Municipality of Padua, is the promoter of an innovative project aimed at providing support to women victims of violence or sex work. In the near future the Group intends to strengthen its presence in the territory of Padua and to open new services mainly oriented toward primary care, in the specific fields of mental health and job placement.

Activities

The Group provides services in key areas of intervention, namely mental health, disability, social exclusion and job placement. Specifically, in the areas of intervention, the services offered are:

- mental health: personalised paths to reduce the impact of mental illness. The Group operates several facilities for people with psychiatric disorders including a rehabilitation centre, a residential protected therapeutic community and apartments for people with different degrees of self-sufficiency.
- disability: individualised projects aimed at the recovery or enhancement of skills and autonomy. Among the initiatives there are day care centres for disabled people with different levels of self-sufficiency. The Group also manages a housing community for people with mental health problems and physical disabilities, and community housing for people with psychiatric disorders.
- social exclusion: services aimed at improving the situation of users in distress. The Group's commitment in this area is strong, providing services from residential care to the development of social and work integration pathways. The initiatives organised in this area are a day care centre for initial reception, a day centre for employment and a community for people living on the streets.

- work inclusion: paths for people needing support to be ready for employment. The job placements are managed mostly by PNL which offers many opportunities especially with regard to services for local companies. Among them are: packaging, assembly, machining and electromechanical manufacturing, storage and logistics. A professional business team focus on the commercial aspects, and contract acquisition.

Achievements

Over the years, the Group has built a strong network of relationships which have undeniably facilitated its success. The decision not to adopt a top-down organisational structure has proven to be wise, as the Group can access the support of all its associated co-operatives and thus increase its efforts and diversify the services offered. The absence of a single leader has also facilitated the sharing of responsibilities within the Group and the professionalisation of all the members.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

One of the most important characteristics of the Group is its structure and ability to create a real rehabilitative chain. Another transferrable feature is the innovative project with the Municipality of Padua whereby the Group has started a series of initiatives aimed at the protection of women victims of domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

Total income 2011/12

6,000,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Being a joint group of social co-operatives, if public funding were withdrawn, it could continue to exist but would probably have initial difficulties.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strength: the constitution of a joint co-operative group rather than a consortium of co-operatives was a strategic choice, as it offered the same advantages with less stringent legal obligations. The decision not to adopt a top-down organisational structure has proven to be an undeniable strength of the Group, enabling it to increase and diversify its workload. The absence of a single leader has also facilitated the sharing of responsibilities within the Group and the professionalisation of all the members.

Weakness: an initial critical element was the fact that the associates came from different regions, and therefore had to build new networks. It was also challenging to get recognition from local government.

Rio Terà Dei Pensieri (Italy)

Overview

The Rio Terà dei Pensieri co-operative was founded by a group of volunteers to offer people in jail an alternative to the cell, aiming mainly to resocialise prisoners through volunteering. Over time, the activities have developed with a particular focus on training and employment, as this is considered to be the main tool to encourage responsibility and inclusion. Detainees have a variety of opportunities to learn work related skills to equip themselves for life on the 'outside'.

Location

Venice, Veneto, Italy

Objectives

The co-operative focuses on the training and employment of prisoners with the goal of providing opportunities for them to learn work skills and equip them for a lawful life. The co-operative works on specific projects (see section below) and in future aims to strengthen the online sales network and increase the sale of cosmetic products to the hotel sector.

Activities

"L'orto delle meraviglie" (the garden of wonders) with a bio-plantation, cosmetic laboratory, graphic paging and screen printing, leather industry, and glass cutting for mosaics.

Achievements

The co-operative has created a small business whilst continuing to uphold the value of training for people in prison. The co-operative has had some success with improving the prisoners' sense of personal responsibility.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

The idea of work rehabilitation of prisoners is a highly transferable concept. For these people, work is an important opportunity to develop the sense of responsibility essential to living a lawful life. Even if the prisoner does not continue with the job that s/he has learned, they will carry with them a wealth of experience, a concept of the value of work, and an understanding of rules for living.

Total income 2011/12

600,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

The GP focuses on activities that do not rely only on the public sector, however they are facing some difficulties in overcoming the recent reduction in public spending.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

The main strength of the co-operative's activity is having managed to create a small business, whilst continuing to uphold the value of training for people in prison. Thanks to this business, Rio Terà does not fully depend on public funding; a major strength in times of public funding cuts.

The co-operative's weaknesses are related to the lack of managerial skills of the associates. Their educational background is essentially social, so they are now investing in more management training. They are more skilled in supporting and helping than in dealing with the challenges of the market, which is becoming the main source of income.

Seen2help (UK)

Overview

Seen2help provides virtual outsourcing services to businesses, eg administration, reception and bookkeeping. All employees ('team members') come from the military community, eg family, service leavers, civilians within military towns, etc. By providing a virtual service, this means that employment can continue even if an employee moves, eg when military personnel are posted elsewhere.

Location

Aldershot, Hampshire, UK

Objectives

To provide sustainable employment to members of the military community.
To provide cost effective, flexible support to businesses.

Activities

Providing sustainable employment, flexible support to businesses and networking events to bring together military and business communities. Currently setting up an Enterprise Centre in Aldershot which will offer office space and training opportunities (including a week long programme for both military and non-military people looking to set up in business or looking for employment). This will be in partnership with Hampshire County Council and WSX Enterprise (another social enterprise).

Achievements

Employed first person in June 2012; now employ 18 staff. Awarded grant of £135,000 (166,000 €) from Armed Forces Community Covenant. Sponsored triathlon event. Looking to build a 'Paralympic' team for the next triathlon event. Enabled one particular client to increase turnover by almost £300,000 (368,000 €) in 8 months through use of seen2help's virtual services.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Business model could be applied to other industries, particularly fishing and farming, which rely on their geographical location.

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes, but not in current form. They can only afford to employ staff through external funding.

Trojan Mailing Ltd (UK)

Overview

Trojan Mailing offer work based training to people who have mental health issues or learning disabilities. They do this through commercial work that funds the training for their trainees and the social enterprise as a whole. They provide a digital print and mail fulfilment service that is capable of competing in a modern marketplace whilst still fulfilling a valuable social purpose.

Location

Southampton, Hampshire, UK

Start date

Registered as company limited by guarantee in October 2012, started trading in December 2011. Took over from the charity, Sector Mailing, which closed down in 2008. Many of Sector Mailing's beneficiaries transferred over to Trojan Mailing.

Objectives

Goals are: to create a stable and secure environment for beneficiaries; to prove that social enterprise can be successful despite no external funding; to provide an enterprising commercial business with a social purpose.

Activities

Work-based training and provision of post-room and facilities department. Beneficiaries (otherwise known as 'trainees') are trained on the job and gain experience of meeting deadlines and providing high quality work.

Achievements

Craig Brown, one of Trojan's directors has completed the Hampshire School for Social Entrepreneurs (HSSE) course. Trojan Mailing is now recognised as a valued training provider giving bespoke skills that are easily transferrable. They have also demonstrated their success in providing a trading company as well as a social purpose.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

The model would work well in other contexts and countries. The company is as autonomous as possible, and is not reliant on one person being the figurehead.

Total income 2011/12

122,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes

Women's Wisdom (UK)

Overview

Women's Wisdom provides a range of support for people who are furthest away from the labour market. The ultimate aim is to gain employment or self-employment.

Location

Southampton, Hampshire, UK

Objectives

To provide wrap-around support for rehabilitation of offenders in prison, through the prison gate, and in the community. To increase the opportunities for people to progress into work and self-employment. Working with people to ensure healthy and flourishing family lives. To increase the numbers of women entering employment, education and training. To increase skills through learning and practical application of work based skills which increases the chances of sustained employment. To raise confidence and self-belief and shift attitudes and thinking that drives better family relationships and increased motivation. To increase the chances of resettlement, reintegration and to reduce reoffending.

Activities

Coaching, training, work experience, employer engagement, mentoring, self-employment support, peer group learning, volunteering and signposting across nine pathways namely: attitudes and thinking, housing, debt and finance, substance misuse, education, training and employment, violence against women and abuse, street work and prostitution, families and children, health.

Achievements

Won ESF Leader Award and Gender Equality Award in 2011. Big Venture Challenge winner 2013/14. In addition, Women's Wisdom has demonstrated aspiration and growth as a social enterprise, going from nothing to large scale contracts, eg Serco. Women's Wisdom has the capacity and aspiration to take on large scale contracts.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Very scaleable; the core elements of coaching, mentoring and training can be delivered anywhere.

Total income 2011/12

638,673 €



OPERATIONAL: Rehabilitation and/or Labour Market Integration

От кооперация в корпорация - "Райна Княгиня - П" **ООД. Осигуряване работни места за хора с** **увреждания (Bulgaria)** **From Co-operation to Corporation**

Overview

The Co-operative, "Rayna Knyaginya - P" Ltd, provides employment for people with different types and degrees of disability. They produce plastic products (packaging for creams and clothes hangers), sew working clothes and make different logos and marks on fabric. All the people working in the co-operative are disabled and, for the rapid adaptation to the labour process, need mentors from the senior staff of the co-operative. The social impact of the enterprise is in the creation of employment for people with disabilities.

Location

Panagyurishte, Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

Start date

May, 1966

Objectives

Integration of people with disabilities into the labour market. The motto of the firm is "A variety bigger than your imagination". It constantly pursues innovation. One of its core objectives, however, is to guarantee integration of people with disabilities into the labour market.

Activities

The enterprise provides employment for individuals with different degrees of reduced work capacity. 46 new jobs have been created for people with disabilities. For the successful adaptation of the employees to the working process, the firm has embraced the practice of mentorship by senior employees and all kinds of physical and emotional support for disabled people. The main objectives are to achieve long-lasting and sustainable relations between the enterprise, its customers and its employees. The activities on which the firm focuses are: investment in human capital, development of human resources and constant professional learning; investment in productivity through automation of production; maintaining a high quality professional production environment. The activities include:

1. manufacture of plastics - this constitutes the greater part of the firm's activities and contributes 65% of the overall sales. Products are generally diverse cosmetics packaging components, clothes hangers, bag handles, etc.
2. sewing manufacturing - the sewing department is specialised in the production of specialised work wear, ski-wear and hunting clothing, etc. The enterprise possesses all the necessary technical equipment to ensure a high quality end product. Due to this high-level performance, two big Italian companies and one Bulgarian firm initiated a joint ski-wear production in collaboration with "Rayna Knyaginya - P" Ltd.
3. cardboard manufacturing - the enterprise manufactures customised cardboard packaging. The firm realises economies of scale, due to the high production levels maintained.

Achievements

Permanent employment for 46 people with disabilities. These individuals have the opportunity to enter into the labour market, receive professional development, and work in mixed-ability groups.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

"Rayna Knyaginya-P" Ltd is a highly transferable good practice. The enterprise operates privately, ensures a high quality of production and competitive prices, and strongly motivates disabled people to work. By purchasing goods, companies can feel that they are contributing towards the provision of employment, investment in human capital and promotion of continuing professional development for people with disabilities.

Total income 2011/12

500,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes, it could continue its existence but its competitiveness would decrease considerably.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: "Rayna Knyaginya-P" Ltd. has long experience in the employment of persons with reduced work capacity. It also has extensive experience in the implementation of national projects and programmes under the European Social Fund and significant social and investment projects funded by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The social impact of the company can be seen in the creation of jobs for people with disabilities. Thanks to organisations such as "Rayna Knyaginya-P" Ltd, disabled people have the chance to obtain employment and vocational training.

Economic challenges:

- increasing the volume of production by developing and offering a greater variety of products and services;
- maintaining business relations with customers in terms of increasing competition and import of goods;
- economic sustainability, flexible pricing policy related to the ever changing market requirements.

Social challenges:

- adaptation and social integration in mixed teams;
- creation of systems for organisation and human resource management.

Lessons learned: the assessment and recognition of people with disabilities provide incentives for the co-operative to continue its aim to integrate disadvantaged people by providing specific jobs. Finding and staying in employment is not only a source of income for people with disabilities, it provides a life purpose and meaning. "Rayna Knyaginya-P" Ltd. is proud to enable these people to have meaningful employment, and to actively participate in the social and cultural life of society.

Работилница за сапуни (Bulgaria) **Hope Soap**

Overview

The micro social enterprise "HOPE Soap" provides employment for young people who have left institutional care settings. After adequate training the youngsters produce and sell handmade soaps and, as such, are able to earn their own income. The main effect is the provision of employment and income for young people raised in orphanages and thus the social enterprise helps them to build skills for an independent life.

Location

Botevgrad, Sofia, Bulgaria

Start date

June 2011

Objectives

Establish an integrated approach for the provision of social services and development of social and employment skills for disadvantaged young people from social institutions.

Activities

Handmade soaps. Soaps are made from a base ready to be melted. Fragrances, colours, etc. are then added and poured into special moulds. After cooling, soaps are packaged and are ready for commercial distribution for corporate events, weddings, etc.

Achievements

Socially excluded young people with few chances for labour market integration receive opportunities to earn their own income. Furthermore, there is potential to expand production and hire more people from the same social background.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

There are no obstacles to this practice being transferred across political boundaries. Subject to local enterprise laws, it could be implemented in many contexts.

Total income 2011/12

In 2012 the income from soap sales was 900 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

At this stage the project does not earn enough of its own revenues, but there is a future potential for that.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned.

Strengths: a market product that can potentially provide support and scale-up; highly vulnerable young people get the opportunity for income-generating activities.

Weaknesses and difficulties: to integrate the production into the existing markets; difficulties in identifying specific market niche and targeting the manufactured product; limited sustainability and expansion.

Lessons learned: initial organisational and financial resources are required; retail networks do not easily accept products with such a background; relatively high management skills and a lot of effort is necessary to get to the consumers; a good marketing plan and preliminary marketing are essential.

Asociatia Touched Collection (Romania)

Touched Collection

Overview

The social enterprise, 'Touched Collection', began five years ago when the Hagar Home Maternal Centre organised occupational therapy for at-risk mothers. The enterprise has been developed to act as a source of income for mothers who can't go out to work, have no other support, and are unable to pay for rent or food. Manufacturing of jewellery was born in the Maternal Centre, 'Casa Agar', from the Association Touched Romania umbrella organisation, a provider of social services and child protection programmes, established in 2005. The aim was to develop an occupational therapy workshop to help mothers by providing a source of income, increase self-confidence and motivation, and look forward to the future more positively. Together with teams of U.S. trainers, workers have learned the first steps in manufacturing.

Location

Bucharest, Bucharest Ilfov, Romania

Start date

April 2012

Objectives

To organise occupational therapy for at-risk mothers: practical abilities, training in manufacturing and distribution of jewels and accessories, how to get a job, mentoring and professional training.

Activities

Occupational therapy, professional training and job orientation, placement on the job market for distribution and manufacturing of accessories, developing independent life skills.

Achievements

Winner of the NESsT Competition in 2010; over 50 mothers involved in manufacturing and financially supported; development of 4 product lines :

- jewellery using wood, glass, natural materials and metal (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.)
- Lux collection: earrings, necklaces and sets silver and gold plated, with pearls and Swarovski crystals
- pin collection made of textile materials and beads
- kids collection (earrings and bracelets).

These products are promoted in the online store

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

The entire concept of the social enterprise, occupational therapy, professional training on manufacturing and distribution, online store and social reintegration could be successfully transferred to other contexts.

Total income 2011/12

16,871 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

They have never been supported by public funding.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

They are a flexible organisation that meets the needs of the workers as well as clients.

They are continually searching for solutions to the problem of distribution of their products.

Ateliere Fara Frontiere (Romania)

Workshops without Frontiers

Overview

Workshops without Frontiers is a work integration social enterprise which has created 25 transition jobs for very disadvantaged people. The enterprise helps people reintegrate into society and a stable job on the conventional labour market after around 2 years in social economy workshops. The workshops provide access to counselling, social services, education, training, qualifications and preparation for jobs interviews on the conventional labour market.

Workshops without Frontiers aims to:

- fight against exclusion and discrimination, for the social and economic integration of the most disadvantaged;
- fight against waste and pollution, for responsible waste management and environmental protection, and to promote social cohesion and social responsibility for sustainable development;
- collect, prepare for reuse and recycle waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE);
- turn waste into jobs, refurbished equipment and secondary raw materials for industry;
- collect outdoors publicity waste and transform it into bags and useful accessories for orientation events and ethical fashion;
- refurbish IT equipment following quality criteria, with licensed software and warranty certificates and donate them to communities where they are most needed;
- support education and inclusion, access to technology, and the development of local communities.

Location of GP

Bucharest, Bucharest Ilfov, Romania

Objectives of the GP

Fight against exclusion, unemployment and discrimination, for social cohesion, local development and solidarity; fight against waste, for the protection of the environment and a sustainable development.

Activities that have taken place

Work integration transition job creation for disadvantaged youth, homeless adults, ex-offenders, prisoners, people with disabilities or addictions.

Achievements of the GP

- from the collected WEEE, we reuse an average of 40%, and recycle 60%;
- they have created 25 jobs for very disadvantaged (over 100 in the last 3 years);
- 400 tonnes of WEEE collected;
- 6773 tonnes of CO² emissions saved;
- over 5500 reused IT equipment were donated through their digital solidarity programmes;
- equipped 885 education, training and inclusion projects developed by schools, NGOs, social institutions all over the country;
- over 105,000 disadvantaged children, young people and adults benefited from access to new technology;

- 7 new jobs for non disadvantaged people;
- 25 tonnes of publicity waste collected;
- over 6000 remesh products sold to responsible consumers.

Would your good practice would work well in another European context

They have developed a viable and functional social economy work integration enterprise that is transferrable to other places or economic activities. They have a strong professional social integration methodology which is also fully transferable. They are open to exchange their expertise and social economy models with any other organisation that has similar values to ours. They are currently working with an NGO from the Moldovan Republic on a model and expertise transfer to help them build a local WISE.

Total annual income of GP 2011/12

450,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

They do not have public funding.

Kríziskamra - gyógynövénytermesztés és értékesítés (Hungary)

Crisis Pantry

Overview

The project aims to create jobs for people with mental health problems and addictions. The Diocesan Caritas of Szombathely have been utilising the abandoned gardens of the diocese since 2010. The Bishop providing the inspiration to utilise the gardens' herbal treasures because disabled residents already had some experience with herbs. Today they produce, collect, dry and pack 40 different herbs including mint, lemon grass, lavender, rosemary and sage. They have established a HACCP certified food processing factory and a packaging room. They serve their own herbal teas in their shop and tea house.

Location

Szombathely, West-Transdanubian Region, Hungary

Start date

January 2010

Objectives

The main objectives of the initiative are sustainable job creation, rehabilitation of people with mental health problems and addictions through work and increasing their income-generating capacity, as well as strengthening social inclusion.

Activities

- mapping partners;
- creating partnerships;
- creating jobs on the basis of mutual interests;
- production of marketable products;
- client involvement in complex rehabilitation;
- supporting the clients' integration;
- providing social services (residential and day care).

Achievements

- signing contracts with many big employers to work for them (e.g. EPCOS);
- creation of the central building;
- creation of the lavender plantation and creation of new jobs to collect herbs in Vásárosmiske;
- some patients took part in social employment and produced handcraft products;
- a tea shop was opened in Szombathely where herbal teas and other souvenirs are sold;
- own printing house operating in Szombathely;
- almost all the residents and clients have the opportunity to work in this system – currently 100 people are employed.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

The raw material (the herbs) can be found in other countries, the technology is transferable, and the process can be operated elsewhere.

Total income 2011/12

The total operational cost is 200,000 to 230,000 €. In addition, the salary and social security contributions are paid by the companies that the organisation is working for.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: the workforce is available, the herbal culture of the country is rich, and the herbal industry is of increasing interest in the EU. There is a demand for the products, the enterprise has a sales network and it operates a herb shop and a tea bar. Secondary processing of the herbs (eg herbal souvenirs) is carried out and related products created. The employment process is used as a therapeutic tool.

Weaknesses: extremely strict operational-hygienic rules about processing herbs.

FairKauf e.G. (Germany) **FairKauf Department Store**

Overview

Established as a second-hand store pursuing social objectives, FairKauf consider themselves to be a 'rara avis' (a bird as rare as a black swan). In times of growing social problems, it is important to open new perspectives for disadvantaged people. FairKauf does this by selling used goods at reasonably cheap prices rather than giving them away as gifts. In this way, people in need are not receiving alms but preserve their dignity and are invited to participate in social life rather than being excluded.

The concept of FairKauf follows the model of social department stores, which exist in Germany in many forms, following different concepts. However the idea of FairKauf, implemented in a liberal market economy, is to sustain itself through trade. Everyone buying in FairKauf contributes to making the idea sustainable, as a lasting enrichment of the City of Hannover.

FairKauf's main objective however is to create opportunities for, and offer employment to, unemployed people with the long-term objective of being fully integrated into the labour market. They work in close collaboration with the public employment agency in Hannover. FairKauf's legal form is that of a non-commercial (not-for-profit) registered co-operative. Due to the steady economic growth that FairKauf has been achieving since their foundation in 2006, there has never been a need for public subsidies. Conversely, with a constantly growing number of employees (currently 220), FairKauf has been further expanding, aiming to have five facilities within the next five years.

Location

Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany

Start date

19 July 2007

Objectives

1. social objectives: In collaboration with the public employment agency in Hannover, FairKauf is offering vocational training/employment to unemployed people with a long-term objective of being integrated into the mainstream labour market.
2. business oriented objectives: living from trading pre-owned goods, which means being able to cover all costs and investing the surplus in further vocational training of disadvantaged groups, such as long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, etc.

Activities

- selling second-hand goods (eg furniture, clothing, household goods, and books) at affordable prices, donated by those who do not need them anymore;
- to the same end, offering other services, eg collection and delivery of goods, house clearance and collecting salvage;
- refurbishing the pre-owned goods, thus contributing to saving natural resources;
- offering vocational training/apprenticeships in retail trade, logistics and administration. This is done in collaboration with the public agency for employment. Unemployed people are offered temporary or permanent, part-time

or full-time jobs. Moreover, members of the co-operative society agree to participate as volunteers (for several hours or days per month), working for civil society in different fields.

Achievements

A continuously growing number of employees (from 7 in 2008 to 220 in 2013) is a great sign of success. A large number of volunteers experience day-to-day work in FairKauf and see this as a positive experience. FairKauf has become a trade-mark. According to a survey, 55% of the population of Hannover know of FairKauf. From the beginning there were signs of success. The project won several prizes, such as the Citizen Participation of Niedersachsen 2008, and the CSR-Seal of 2009 of Germany – Land of Ideas.

Criteria for success were: good public relations and a steadily growing number of customers. FairKauf is becoming a prosperous and growing enterprise, despite having started at a time when many other department stores are closing.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

FairKauf's clear-cut concept proves not only well-suited, but highly recommended for transfer to other European contexts, since:

1. FairKauf does not work outside the market;
2. FairKauf sees itself primarily as an enterprise and only secondly a social institution. It contributes to the stability of economic life and society;
3. FairKauf's economic concept follows the rules of supply and demand;
4. FairKauf aims to offer sustainable solutions and not short-term, stop-gap measures;
5. FairKauf aims to benefit all, offering more than simply economic benefits.

Total income 2011/12

1,874,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes, since FairKauf is independent from public funding.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Located in the very middle of the city centre in Hannover - right at the heart of Hannover's shopping mile - and stretching over 5 floors totalling an area of 1,000 m², FairKauf has become a significant player within the city landscape. Another particular strength lies with FairKauf's legal form as a registered co-operative society. Social department stores are located on a continuum between the extremes of "give-away" shops and charities on the one side and professionally managed commercial department stores on the other. They have a choice of legal frameworks between association/'registered society' (eV), limited company recognised as common benefit/charitable organisation (gGmbH) and co-operative society (eG). For FairKauf, the choice was registered co-operative society (eG), which allows it to reach all economic and social objectives of a social department store, with competent leaders accompanying people, encouraging and qualifying them and enabling them to find employment in the labour market. Furthermore, the self-financed eG is immune to hostile take-over. It allows limited liability, easy entry and withdrawal of members, integrating partners of different size or strength in a democratic internal structure, low capital contributions and accumulation of indivisible reserves from undistributed surplus. The democratic internal structure is being ensured, among other things, by each 'shareholder' having a single vote, independent of the size of their share.



Difficulties are to be expected - and overcome - while expanding to other locations across the city. Lessons learned are that good PR mechanisms remain essential.

Zala Megyei Szocioterápiás Intézmény - Kerámia műhely működtetése, a termékek értékesítése (Hungary)

Step into the market through ceramics production

Overview

People with addictions are trained in ceramic techniques and the products sold on the market. The work forms part of a therapeutic rehabilitation programme. The organisation provides institutional rehabilitation care for people suffering from addictive illnesses, and provides home and home nursing/caring services. It organises therapeutic and vocational employment for the people living in the institution, the aim of which is to maintain abstinence, and to develop working skills and competences that are necessary for long-term and continuous employment. The activities carried out include: sewing, garden works, cleaning, weaving, plaster-casting and making ceramic items. The pottery workshop was established in 2002, and the plaster-casting workshop in 2005. Training was provided, with 10 potters and 12 plaster/shape casters being awarded a qualifying certificate. The items produced by the people suffering from addictive illnesses have been certified by the Arts Council as 'arts and crafts compositions'. The workshop primarily undertakes outsourcing for potters working in the county, but it also creates its own products which are sold in the on-site shop.

Location

Kehidakustány, West-Transdanubian Region, Hungary

Start date

January 2003

Objectives

Complex rehabilitation of addicts through training, work and therapy, to enable ex-addicts to return to the open labour market.

Activities

- pottery training;
- complex rehabilitation of addicts (training and work being part of the process);
- receiving orders, market research;
- production;
- sales.

Achievements

The people who took part in the program acquired skills and became employees. The organisation marketing and sold products produced by participants.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

The support for addicts through training, therapy and employment in order to increase social inclusion.

Total income 2011/12

The total budget of the whole program is not known. The total cost of the employment is circa 2 € /person/hour.

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes. The income of the ceramics factory and the plaster-casting factory covers the costs of operation.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: highly equipped infrastructure, trained ceramic artists, constant clients and customers. Tourism is significant in the town which ensures a growing market for ceramics.

Weaknesses: the workshop is operating in an institution maintained by the state, which inhibits the further strengthening of entrepreneurial practices.



OPERATIONAL: Enablement of Social Enterprise

Πράσινη Γέφυρα-Τοπικό Δίκτυο για την Παραγωγή, Μεταποίηση και Προώθηση Οπωροκηπευτικών- Βιολογικών Γεωργικών Προϊόντων και Ειδών Ανθοκομίας (Greece) **Green Bridge**

Overview

Green Bridge is a co-financed project that was designed and implemented with a very specific goal: to address unemployment by promoting social entrepreneurship. The social co-operatives that have already been established within the framework of the project work on the production, processing and promotion of agricultural products and floriculture with very positive results. The 80 beneficiaries of the project come from socially vulnerable groups. The project provides support to enable the beneficiaries to establish their own social co-operatives in the fields of agriculture and floriculture. This support comes in the form of supplementary services, training, allocation of municipal land for agri-production, consultancy in the creation and start-up of social co-operatives, and promotion through networking.

Location of GP (regional)

Peristeri, Attica, Greece

Start date

July 2012

Objectives of the GP

The overall objective of Green Bridge is to engage local stakeholders of 3 large municipalities in the region of Attica (Peristeri, Dionysos and Kifissia), in order to ensure the creation of new jobs for unemployed people from vulnerable groups in the fields of agriculture and floriculture.

Activities that have taken place

Networking, dissemination and awareness raising, project management, consultancy, start of training seminars.

Achievements of the GP

The project is still a work in progress, but to date the achievements have been: promotion and publicity activities have been carried-out; supplementary services (eg consultancy in personal development, career planning) are ongoing; training seminars are being given; network design has been finalised and the networking process has commenced.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Social entrepreneurship rewards personal commitment and personal labour and not capital. Thus, in such a difficult economic period for Europe, the creation of social co-operatives in agriculture can be a solution for unemployment and the redirection to the primary sector, which is a comparative advantage for many European countries. Projects like Green Bridge offer valuable help to new entrepreneurs through consultancy services and training and they can be a very good example for future initiatives.

Total annual income of GP 2011/12

150,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Green Bridge, as a co-financed project, largely depends on public funding. However, the social co-operatives that have been created with the support of the project will continue to exist without public funding.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

For all people involved in the implementation of the project, it has been a challenging and very exciting trip. The beneficiaries that were chosen to participate are the strength of this project and the main reason for the founders' hard work. The results up to now have proven the founders right! The main difficulty that they faced at the beginning of the project was to convince these people, who were in a very disadvantaged position, with no job and very limited financial capabilities, that they are capable of changing their lives by participating in a social co-operative.



OPERATIONAL: Amenities for Local People

Creación de cooperativa para la gestión de instalaciones deportivas de titularidad pública (Spain)

Creation of a Co-operative for the Management of Public Sport Facilities

Overview

Management of a swimming pool in the municipality, including activities (eg. celebrations, night schedule) which bring about new uses of the premises, thereby enlarging the business and the benefits. The public sport facilities had fallen into disuse. A newly formed co-operative was successful in applying to run the facilities. Sporting activities are now run for 13 hours a day, 6 days per week.

Location

Gerena, Andalusia, Spain

Start date

February 2011

Objectives

To re-use the sport facilities while creating employment, encouraging the take up of sport in the municipality, and the use of renewable energy.

Activities

Creation of the co-operative by 4 partners under 30 years old, creating 9 new working posts, offering a wide range of sport and leisure activities in a broad schedule, with work-life balance measures supporting social integration and disability. It generates synergies of entrepreneurial co-operation and boosting healthy lifestyles in the local population.

Achievements

Exploitation of pre-existing facilities for the use of the population; energy efficiency and stable jobs for young people and people who have difficulty in accessing the job market.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

Andalusia has special weather conditions allowing it to carry out outdoor activities all year long, but even if it was an indoor activity, broadening the scope seems feasible in any other country. Moreover, the company was able to detect a need and lobby the local government by presenting a business plan and seeking support from local employers. This local dimension easily applies in other contexts.

Total income 2011/12

123,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Capacity for innovation; commitment and responsibility towards the community; involvement of workers in the management of the business; controlled risk assessment; reasonable price of services.

Weaknesses: Not all the workers involved are full-time as might be wished.

Difficulties: Initially, the team's inexperience provided challenges.

Lessons learned: The need to clearly communicate the added value to decision-makers.

SoCo Music Project (UK)

Overview

SoCo is a regional arts organisation, providing accessible creative opportunities for people of all ages.

Location

Southampton, Hampshire, UK

Start date

March 2009 (incorporated as company limited by guarantee)

Objectives

To promote creativity and culture through music; enhancing the cultural offer in the region; encouraging partnership working; improving confidence and communication through creative activity and practice.

Activities

Creative music and arts workshops; networking and continued professional development for practitioners; music and cultural events; strategic development of arts and cultural offer within the region.

Achievements

Development of creative programmes for vulnerable adults; visible offer for young people; delivery of festivals and events; development of organisation from local to regional.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Would transfer well as has broad funding strategy and wide service user base. Is a universal and engaging offer as based around music. Beneficiaries face universal challenges.

Total income 2011/12

99,921 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Yes - through commercial use of studio space and earned income, eg through running Arts Award training.

ParkLife (UK)

Overview

ParkLife (Community Interest Company) is a community café and community room in St James Park in Southampton. A variety of activities take place in the community room and hard to reach individuals are encouraged to get involved. The café supplies a variety of products, to cater for all 'pockets', and uses local suppliers and Fairtrade products. The park was previously under-used and run-down, and the community came together to submit a successful funding bid to regenerate the park. It is now an extremely well-used and loved community facility, and the community café and community room is part of its sustainability strategy.

Location

Southampton, Hampshire, UK

Start date

July 2011. Set up as trading arm of Friends of St James Park (FoSJP), a charity which has regenerated St James Park in Southampton.

Objectives

To provide a café in the park for all members of the community, providing reasonably priced goods, using local and fairly traded produce. To provide a room for the community to use for health, education and social purposes. To make a profit to plough back into the social enterprise (not yet achieved!).

Activities

Activities in the community room include: yoga, job club, room hire (at 4 different rates), parenting courses, supper club for local businesses, use by Filipino Association, special events, eg Sausage Week, Bastille Day, Diwali event.

Achievements

Encouraged people from all different backgrounds to use St James Park. Provided point of contact for vulnerable members of society. Achieved valuable health education and social impact through use of community room. Provided employment for 15 people, one apprenticeship and also voluntary work. Two former employees have set up own business. Provided local businesses with trade.

Elements that would transfer particularly well to other contexts

Yes, the model would be easily replicable to other parks in the UK and potentially Europe-wide.

Total income 2011/12

151,405 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Not currently, but funding is due to be withdrawn in April 2014. ParkLife has a target to increase sales by 30% by September 2014.



Operational: Social/Financial/ Legal Exclusion

Arbeitsgemeinschaft (AG) Resohelp des Diakonischen Werks, Stadtverband Hannover e.V. (Germany)

Resohelp

Overview

A well-established contact point for ex-prisoners in Hannover, Resohelp has been working for more than 40 years on counselling and supporting delinquents, sentenced prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families to gain social rehabilitation and reintegration. Resohelp offers extensive information and support on managing the various issues encountered by the target group, which range from the prevention of detention, flat-hunting, and welfare benefit claims all the way through debt counselling and other individual problems.

Location

Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany

Start date

1969

Objectives

Helping ex-prisoners reintegrate within the community and develop social skills, such as self-responsibility, self-care, and social responsibility.

Activities

Advice/counselling, acting as agency for clients and the Public Prosecution Service (eg on adjustment of fines), supporting the clients on flat-hunting and other legal and administrative formalities.

Achievements

In 2012 and 2013, Resohelp has given support to about 500 people per year.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

Creating a working partnership to ensure the long-term success has proved to be a particularly good idea that could be transferred to other contexts. The entire programme might be well suited for transfer to another European context.

Total income 2013

Not known

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

No

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: Long-standing experience as a Working Partnership.

Difficulties: Creating the necessary acceptance for the target group within the local communities.

Hannoversche Werkstätten gem. GmbH (Germany) **Hannover Workshops**

Overview

The Hannover Workshops create opportunities for people with disabilities to develop their personal and vocational skills within the areas of working, living, and gastronomy. Within the field of vocational training, people with disabilities receive vocational qualifications corresponding to professions on the general job market. Within the area of assisted living, the Hannover Workshops encourage and supports disabled people to lead an independent, self-determined and dignified life.

Location

Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany

Start date

1997

Objectives

As stipulated in the Social Security Statute Book, the concept and tasks of a workshop for the disabled are:

“... for those people with disabilities who due to the nature or severity of the disability cannot or cannot yet be (re-)employed on the general job market ...”

- to ensure appropriate vocational training and employment;
- to maintain, develop, improve or regain their ability to work and become employed and thereby to continue their personal development;
- foster the transition of those who are suited to the general job market with the help of suitable interventions.

The workshop is open to all disabled people if, from having taken part in the vocational training, they could be expected to perform an amount of productive work that can be put to good economic use.

Activities

With a main workshop venue in Kleefeld, and premises in Hainholz, Kirchrode and Rethen all covering the vocational training area, The Hannover Workshops also provide a domicile for assisted living (the Hannoversche WohnAssistenz) and offer a home for people with autism in Lüdersen. At the main workshop venue in Kleefeld, the activities include: wood and metal working, cleaning services, industrial assembly work, textile processing, laundry services, manufacture of brooms & brushes, basket work for chairs, bicycle workshop, car maintenance, electronic scrap recycling; printing & newspaper sales, postal services, administration & office technology; gardening & landscape gardening, floristry, farming, firewood; gastronomic services. Different levels of assistance are provided depending upon individual needs, so there are groups with extra supervision, groups for people with severe multiple disabilities, and support groups.

Achievements

The institution currently employs roughly 1,000 people in the workshops and about 250 members of staff for group supervision, specialist services and administration.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

The Hannover Workshops' quality management system has been certified according to the DIN EN ISO 9001:2008 standard. Thus, operational procedures within all ranges of work are assured to correspond to internationally recognised standards. The programme is likely to be well-suited for transfer to another European context.

Total income 2011/12

Not known

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

No.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths: magnitude – the Hannover Workshops is the largest institution in Hannover of its kind, with an extremely broad range of activities, long-lasting experience and partnership with three other networks of people with disabilities. Difficulties: competition with low-wage countries, such as Ukraine.

Il Grillo (Italy)

The Cricket

Overview

The Social Co-operative 'Il Grillo' was founded on 8 May 1995 by a group of young people in Mirano. Its fundamental objective is to: 1) support environmental protection; 2) support the employment integration of local young people with mental health problems (resulting from the closure of 'asylums').

Location

Zelarino, Veneto, Italy

Start date

May 1995

Objectives

The basic aims of the Il Grillo Co-operative are:

- to create jobs;
- job-placement of people with mental health problems;
- support for other people with mental health problems eg housing;
- promote positive working practices ie care for the worker and environment.

Activities

Il Grillo carries out activities in three different fields:

1. Public services' waste management:
 - separating waste collections;
 - designing and managing collection centres (recycling eco-centres);
 - street cleaning;
 - delivery of recycling containers;
 - maintenance of recycling containers;
 - information campaigns on environment and integration of psychiatric patients.
2. Waste collection services for individuals:
 - selection and collection of used printer cartridges;
 - collection of waste electrical and electronic equipment;
 - document shredding;
 - paper and cardboard collection;
 - house clearance;
 - consulting services re: waste disposal and security;
 - environmental training.
3. Recovery general services:
 - recovery and recycling of bulky waste, specialising in furniture and leisure items;
 - recovery and sale of reusable cartridges.

Achievements

Il Grillo focuses on waste reuse. In relation to its employees, it does not require the certification of disability or attendance on training courses for job placement. The basic methodology of work is to select services that can employ a large number of

people with disabilities. At the same time, the services offered by the Co-operative become increasingly personalised and specific to the user. Moreover, the Co-operative tries to solve the other needs of people affected by psychiatric problems. The Co-operative invests seriously and systematically in the means of work and production. It is in possession of both environmental certification and security certification.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

One of the most important elements of this project is the mix of environment protection, and the innovative approach to educational measures for people affected by psychiatric problems. The Co-operative was originally set up to provide services to the public sector, but has subsequently developed a strategy to expand its business in the private sector.

Total income 2011/12

3,450,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Il Grillo has an entrepreneurial approach so, even if public funding were withdrawn, the Co-operative would continue to exist.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Main strengths are:

- the co-operation culture and mentality;
- the Co-operative invests seriously and systematically in the means of work and production;
- it offers professional and high competences for relationship with the public sector, recognised to such an extent that some public companies required the Co-operative to join a partnership;
- it constantly strives to adjust to the growth of the services requested. Over time there has been a constant development of work activities and the start of significant partnerships with many public companies;
- its model regarding people with psychiatric difficulties is an integration 'of absolute normality'. The focus is not centred on the psychiatric past of the person, but on his/her working present.

Weakness: the organisation has not so far been able to stay completely in step with the growth of activities and services.

Primavera '85 (Italy) **Springtime '85**

Overview

The activities of the Co-operative are mostly educational-rehabilitative and charitable. Primavera '85 was founded as a result of the work of volunteers and parents of disabled children, and operates in the province of Vicenza. The co-operative focuses in particular on improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, starting from the identification of their needs, their abilities and their expectations. Primavera '85 promotes educational, social and work-inclusion activities for people with disadvantages of various kinds. The Co-operative is governed by the Assembly of Associates, formed exclusively by stakeholders: families, professionals, volunteers. The Assembly of Associates provides the co-operative with the expertise it needs for daily management.

Location

Sovizzo, Veneto, Italy

Start date

1985

Objectives

The activities of the Co-operative are mostly educational-rehabilitative and charitable. In addition to this there are also the job training activities aimed at promoting the employment of disadvantaged people. Primavera '85 strongly believes in the use of the Individual Educational Plan (PEI) as a key instrument of the rehabilitation and education path of the person. Through the PEI it is possible to combine and coordinate rehabilitative, educational and other supportive interventions on the basis of age, disability and mode of intervention delivery. A series of weekly activities are coordinated and monitored by the team of operators.

Activities

The Co-operative is active in the following:

- activities carried out in support of disadvantaged people;
- activities carried out in support of children in local schools;
- activities carried out with elderly users;
- vocational training activities;
- day care centre "Con-tatto";
- a goldsmith workshop which has been active since 2011 (involving young people with disabilities in the production of jewellery).

Achievements

Primavera '85 aims to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, starting from the identification of their needs, abilities and expectations. Primavera '85 promotes services of educational, social and work-inclusion for people with psycho-physical disadvantages of various kinds.

Would this programme work well in another European context?

The idea of involving people with mental and physical disabilities is quite transferrable. Working on the creation of jewellery has helped to re-qualify the concept of disability, by linking it to beauty. The project could be implemented everywhere with the consultancy of a goldsmith, a laboratory, and lots of creativity.

Total income 2011/12

1,500,000 €

If public funding were withdrawn, could the GP continue to exist?

Primavera '85 is largely dependent on public funding but there are opportunities for the enterprise to increase its economic independence.

Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

The recognised strengths of the Co-operative are the wide local networks that sponsor and support all the initiatives carried out; the constant attention to the quality of the services provided; and the focus on continuous training of its workers.

The main weakness is Primavera's strong dependence on the public sector as the majority client.



We hope you have enjoyed reading about some of the social enterprise good practices identified in the 9 regions involved in the MESSE project.

If you would like more detailed information or contact details about any of the featured projects, please refer to the project website at www.messe-project.eu.



- The MESSE project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and made possible by the INTERREG IVC Programme
- The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention. EUR 302 million is available for project funding but, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy makers.